

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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INTERIOR WILL WORK WITH TEXAS A & M ON 1080 IN SHEEP COLLAR RESEARCH

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas A & M University are seeking to work out a cooperative agreement for research into the effects of Compound 1080 in the toxic sheep collar as a method for controlling coyotes, it was announced today.

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus, who agreed to relax his ban on further Federal participation in 1080 research solely to the extent of this cooperative project, noted that the toxic collar is recognized as a highly selective way to eliminate an "offending" predator--one which tries to kill livestock.

"Scientists seem unable to agree on the meaning of some preliminary research done during the past year or two," Andrus said. "There is some doubt expressed as to how much 1080 is a lethal dose to a coyote and how much has secondary impacts on non-target species.

"We will insist that the research be conducted under stringent controls, and we are proposing formation of an ad hoc oversight committee, balanced between representatives of sheep and goat raisers on the one hand, and environmental organizations on the other," the Secretary said.

"I still tend to believe that other chemicals, lethal and nonlethal, offer more promise for effective coyote control in the next few years than does 1080," he said, "and the Fish and Wildlife Service will press its research into other chemicals for the sheep collar, a device that, by its design, strikes at offending coyotes, and not random individual animals.

"A coyote will not be poisoned by 1080 in a sheep collar unless it is attacking a sheep, so the experimentation we want will be self-limiting, with any unfortunate secondary effects contained and measured with some precision."

Sheep collars, an experimental device developed during the 1970's by the Fish and Wildlife Service, contain pouches of poison which are pierced by the teeth of a predatory animal going for the sheep's throat. At this time, 1080 has been the poison used most successfully in sheep collar research.

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